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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 000181

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STATE FOR WHA/CAR-COLLINS AND L/CID-WALTER
COMMERCE FOR TODD FOX

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/02/2017
TAGS: [EINV](#) [CASC](#) [PGOV](#) [KIDE](#) [AC](#)
SUBJECT: ANTIGUA/BARBUDA: TWO STEPS BACK ON HALF MOON BAY
CASE

REF: A. 12/06/06 ROGERS-SHANNON LETTER (NOTAL)

[1](#)B. 06 BRIDGETOWN 1706

Classified By: Ambassador Mary M. Ourisman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) On January 22, EconOff met with Amcit Natalia Querard, Managing Director of Half Moon Bay (HMB). Querard complained about harassment she has been experiencing, allegedly instigated by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda (GOAB), and the perceived apathy of the State Department. Querard came close to a resolution with the GOAB in September 2006, but this prospective settlement now seems to have fallen apart, prompting her attorney to send a letter to the Departments of State and Commerce requesting immediate action. End Summary.

Threats and Harassment

[1](#)2. (C) On January 22, EconOff met with Natalia Querard, Managing Director of Half Moon Bay, to obtain an update regarding her property dispute with the GOAB. Querard thanked EconOff for requesting a face-to-face meeting. Querard discussed recent incidents of harassment and threats that she believed to be retaliation by the GOAB for her lawsuits against the government for its expropriation of Half Moon Bay. These incidents include damaged property, illegal break-ins, denied access to the Internet, and enormous electricity charges levied against her by the GOAB's utility company. These incidents were also described in a December 6, 2006 letter to Ambassador Ourisman, Assistant Secretary Shannon, and Todd Fox from Querard's counsel, William D. Rogers (ref A). Post understands that L/CID will respond to Rogers' letter.

Inaction of Department of State

[1](#)3. (C) Querard also used the meeting to criticize the U.S. Embassy in Bridgetown and the Department for their inaction, but did imply she had a contact in the State Department who has been very helpful to her. When asked for the person's name, Querard changed the subject and asked that the U.S. government consider imposing sanctions on GOAB under the Helms-Burton Act, or other forms of retaliation.

So Close, Yet So Far Away

[1](#)4. (C) As indicated in reftels, Embassy's repeated efforts to

facilitate a mutually satisfactory resolution of the dispute have been unsuccessful. William D. Rogers, Querard's attorney and a former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the GOAB last fall. The MOU was considered a breakthrough and was supported by Querard and both the Attorney General and Prime Minister of the GOAB. According to Rogers and Querard, however, it was later sabotaged by another attorney hired by Querard, who engaged in parallel discussions with the Attorney General, without Querard and Roger's prior knowledge. In light of the apparent collapse of the MOU, Rogers requested in his December 6 letter (ref A) that the Departments of State and Commerce take immediate action against the GOAB.

Comment

15. (C) The September 2006 MOU appeared to be a significant step toward a mutually acceptable resolution. It now appears the resolution has taken the proverbial two steps back. A negotiated settlement is the best way to resolve this dispute. However, each new setback in a mutually acceptable resolution appears to increase mutual suspicion, which prevents progress toward resolution of this longstanding expropriation.
OURISMAN